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ABSTRACT

The "Rainbow Visibility Project" was funded by an Irvine Foundation (California) grant with the primary goal of raising awareness of the gay, lesbian, and bisexual culture at a Roman Catholic university. The "Rainbow Educator Project" was one of five components of the grant the Rainbow Educators (REs), who collaborate as a team of faculty, staff, and students, who receive training and education on issues of sexual orientation, and engage the university community through a variety of educational avenues. An exploratory study investigated the experiences of the RE team members (n=20), who worked with the program from 1999-2001 and were trained to engage the community in dialogue concerning sexual orientation issues. All participants were asked a series of open-ended questions designed to explore their experiences as Rainbow Educators. Only two models explore the identity of heterosexual allies working to end oppression in the gay, lesbian, and bisexual community. The model used by the REs aligned more closely with the Susan Gelberg and Joseph Chojnacki and Rita Hardiman and Bailey Jackson models. Using these models along with scholarship in the areas of college student development, and multiculturalism and diversity in higher education, a new model is proposed for understanding heterosexual ally identity development that operates in concert with the development of gay, lesbian, and bisexual advocate identity development. In this model, processes or phases are described, which occurred with the study's heterosexual and gay/lesbian participants. The model has five phases, which are: (1) entry; (2) fear of the unknown; (3) acknowledgment of privilege; (4) engagement; and (5) conscious self-identification as allies/advocates. This paper is organized around each phase in the model; described and juxtaposed with a stage or stages from previous models; and provides data to support each phase. It concludes with a discussion and recommendations for future study. (Contains 30 references.) (BT)

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Identity Development models: One size fits all? Heterosexual Identity Development and the Search for *Allies* in Higher Education

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Identity Development models: One size fits all?
Heterosexual Identity Development and the Search for "Allies" in Higher Education

Background

The "Rainbow Visibility" project was funded by the Irvine Foundation with the primary goal of raising awareness of the gay, lesbian and bisexual culture at a Roman Catholic University. It was believed that this effort would be consistent with other models designed to support cultural competence efforts at this Southern California University, whose mission statement clearly advocates the "recognition of the dignity of each individual" (University of San Diego Mission statement). However, the stated mission and goals of the university were expressed (by students and faculty) as incongruent with the experiences of gay lesbian and bisexual students, faculty, and staff on campus.

The "Rainbow Educator" project was one of five components of the "Rainbow Visibility" grant, which received approximately $32,000 over a two-year period ('99-'00 and '00-'01 academic years). The university currently funds the Rainbow Educators through the office of Student Affairs. The Rainbow Educators (RE's) who collaborate as a team of faculty, staff, and students, receive training and education on issues of sexual orientation, and then engage the university community through a variety of educational avenues. Each year, the team receives over thirty hours of training (during the fall semester) prior to engaging in any group presentations or activities on campus. They are also required to attend monthly training and debriefing sessions during the second semester when they are doing presentations on campus.

Purpose

This research was exploratory and designed to investigate the experiences of the twenty team members (RE's) who worked with the program from '99-'01 and who were

all trained to engage the university community in dialogue concerning issues of sexual orientation. We examined the attitudes and perceptions of each member of the group in relation to: the entire RE group; their own cultural groups; and the groups to whom they made presentations. Therefore, this paper focuses on the Rainbow Educator participant group only. It is not an analysis of the effects of the Rainbow Visibility Project. We address the analysis of the project in another paper that focuses on institutional understanding and future implications for addressing the needs of the gay, lesbian and bisexual community (Getz, Kirkley, 2003).

The primary purpose of this paper is to understand the experiences of the participants in relation to their identities as heterosexual allies or gay and lesbian advocates for the lesbian, gay, and bisexual (LGB) community. We attempt to engage the reader in an exploration of how the individual identities of the participants are shaped or understood by them, as a result of their work as Rainbow Educators. With that data, we propose an identity development model that is juxtaposed with other models, to enhance our understanding of the stages of awareness that people may experience as they become more supportive of the LGB community.

Methods of Inquiry

This study was a qualitative, exploratory study that investigated in detail the experiences of the Rainbow Educator team members. The primary goal of the research was to gain knowledge from each of the participants involved in the program and to highlight areas that might require further exploration and research. The research questions that framed this study include: (1) what can we learn from these twenty participants about the experiences of people who participate in programs aimed at raising awareness concerning issues of sexual orientation; and, (2) how can we use what we learn to design programs, models and/or support systems that will benefit the gay, lesbian, bisexual (LGB) *and* heterosexual community?

In this research, we gained valuable insights from the perceptions of the twenty participants to elucidate a more holistic interpretation of the program, its effectiveness,

and the impact, if any, it had on them. Included in the group of RE's we interviewed were three faculty members, three administrators, five undergraduate and eight graduate students and one alumnus. Members identified as male, female, heterosexual, gay, lesbian, African American, Anglo, Latina/o, Asian, Filipino, and physically challenged.

All participants were asked a series of open-ended questions designed to explore their experiences as Rainbow Educators. We sought to learn from the participants the reasons for their involvement, and what they learned about themselves and others as a result of their work in the program. All interviews lasted approximately one hour. Each interview was taped and later transcribed, coded and analyzed. Pseudonyms are used throughout and caution is taken so that participants are not easily identifiable by any cultural characteristics.

It should be noted that both researchers were involved in the development and implementation of the Rainbow Visibility Project and we were participants in the Rainbow Educator program, at one time or another. As such, we are stakeholders in relation to the outcomes of this study. This conceivably has two possible consequences: First, the ongoing relationships we have with the RE's and the campus community may have enabled greater trust and honesty in the interview process; and secondly, since our subjects knew we had a stake in the success of the program, they may have withheld information that might be perceived to negatively impact the outcomes. Most of the participants knew we were joined with them in the creation of a more open climate for the LGB community on campus, and therefore we emphasized to them the value of their perspectives in this research. Therefore, we believe they responded in ways that honestly reflected their experiences. In addition, we have made every attempt to interpret the data in as unbiased a way as possible.

Conceptual Framework

The analysis in this paper is shaped primarily by the research in identity development and on identity development models in the areas of heterosexual ally development (Gelberg & Chojnacki, 1995; Broido, E. 2000), black and white racial

identity (Hardiman & Jackson, 1992; Helms, 1990; McIntyre, 1997, and Tatum, 1992); and homosexual identity development (Cass, 1979). There are only two models that explore the identity of heterosexual allies working to end oppression in the gay, lesbian and bisexual (LGB) community (Broido, E. 2000; Gelberg, S. & Chojnacki, 1995). In addition, there is much dialogue concerning the complexities that exist for people with multiple identities, yet there is little empirical evidence to support existing models (Reynolds & Pope, 1991; Meyers, L., et. al., 1991).

We found that our model aligned most closely with the Gelberg & Chojnacki, and Hardiman & Jackson models. However, given the diversity present among the participants we interviewed, and the scarcity of research specific to allies in the area of gay, lesbian and bisexual oppression, we also occasionally reference Cass' homosexual identity development model as well as Helms white racial identity development model, to fully explicate our model as well as to provide clarity on the experiences of participants in this study. Although all of these models indicate stages, many researchers note that identity development does not occur in linear fashion, particularly for individuals with multiple identities (Reynolds & Pope, 1991; Meyers, L., et. al., 1991), and many others suggest the need for a model that is more fluid in nature and nonlinear (Hardiman & Jackson, 1992).

For example, the Hardiman and Jackson model describes "states of consciousness," but they use "stage" as a metaphor to explain the developmental nature of each state of consciousness. Their model describes "how racism affects the development of a sense of group identity for Blacks and Whites by examining the increasingly conscious attention both dominant group members (Whites) and target group members (Blacks) experience as they struggle with racism and strive to attain liberated identities in a persistently racist environment" (p. 23). The five stages in this model are: naïve, acceptance (passive or active), resistance (passive or active), redefinition, and internalization. Broido (2000), in her work with heterosexual ally development made use of the Hardiman/Jackson model to articulate the development of heterosexual allies. She describes how each stage might be applied to heterosexual ally development, using the following descriptors: heterosexual naïve, heterosexual acceptance, heterosexual

resistance, heterosexual redefinition and heterosexual internalization. The Gelberg & Chojnacki model suggests parallels between LGB identity formation and the experiences of professional counselors becoming LGB-affirmative career counselors. In this model, the authors note similarities between their experiences of becoming allies with the LGB community that are similar to the identity development of gay, lesbian and bisexual persons. There are six stages to this model: awareness, ambivalence, empowerment, activism, pride and integration. We attempt to build on the work of Broido and Gelberg & Chojnacki, to examine the identity development of the participants involved in the Rainbow Educator program.

Using these models along with scholarship in the areas of college student development, and multiculturalism and diversity in higher education (Antonio, 1999; Astin, 1993; Tierney, 1992; Tierney, 1993; Love, 1998; Hurtado, S., Milem, J.F., Clayton-Pederson, A., and Allen, W.A., 1998, Tatum, 2000), we propose the possibility of a new model for understanding heterosexual "ally" identity development that operates in concert with the development of gay, lesbian and bisexual (LGB) "advocate" identity development. In our model, we describe processes or phases, similar to the Gelberg & Chojnacki, and Hardiman and Jackson models, which occurred with the heterosexual and gay and lesbian participants in our study. Our model has five *phases*, which are: entry, fear of the unknown, acknowledgement of privilege, engagement, and conscious self-identification as allies/advocates.

The terms "ally" and "advocate" can be defined in a variety of ways. We see parallels in the description of both terms, thus we use the following description to define gay, lesbian and bisexual ***advocates***: *a person who is a member of an oppressed group of people who defends and sustains efforts to end oppression in his or her community*; and a similar definition to describe heterosexual ***allies***: *a person who is a member of the dominant or majority group who works in his/her professional and personal life to support and defend efforts to end oppression for an oppressed population.*

We suggest a model that is developed from the experiences of gay, lesbian, bisexual *advocates* and straight *allies* working together in this program to enhance awareness and understanding; and with the goal of institutional change for the gay,

lesbian and bisexual community. We believe this work is valuable in promoting changes in the oppression of gay, lesbian and bisexual people and as a way to continue to advance a critical consciousness for those working in higher education. In addition, we believe this model could potentially be used to understand the identity development of other people involved in ally/advocate work for other marginalized populations in higher education.

This paper is organized around each phase in our model. Each phase is described and juxtaposed with a stage or stages from the various models previously articulated. The data to support the phase follows the description. We conclude our paper with a discussion and recommendations for future study.

Findings

Entry

The *entry* phase, describes the point at which participants made the decision to join the Rainbow Educator team. This phase is similar to the *awareness* stage described by Gelberg & Chojnacki (1995), in which counselors, working to become affirmative heterosexual allies, became aware of their need to become more active in their willingness to address issues concerning the LGB community. In the *entry* phase and in the *awareness* stage, participants expressed a variety of reasons and influences for seeking out information about the LGB community.

Members of the two RE teams we interviewed had a variety of reasons for joining. The examples given were diverse, for example; for heterosexual members, the work was part of their job as a graduate assistant or they wanted to learn more about the LGB community; and for some of the gay men in particular, they indicated the program would benefit their coming out process, and many, gay and straight, felt the need to support the LGB community on campus. Their ranges of experiences with the LGB community were also quite vast. There were gay, lesbian and straight participants who had a great deal of experience with LGB community, and there were heterosexual participants who had very little exposure or understanding of the LGB community who wanted to learn more. In the *entry* phase of ally/advocate development, the challenge seemed to be getting participants

to understand each other and to work together for positive change.

Sam, a heterosexual graduate student talked about his first exposure to the gay community:

> My whole view of the LGBT community really changed drastically when a great friend of mine, who was actually a teacher of mine in high school, and we became friends afterwards when I was, I guess, a junior in college. We used to hang out once or twice a month and he came out to me. And that was the first time that anyone had come out to me. It was a real powerful experience for me, both in, you know, the trust that was shown there because I think that I was one of the first people that found out. And also in the real challenge that it put to me to really redefine, sort of, the stereotypes that I had. 'Cause I always looked at him and thought now here is the consummate male figure in my life. Deep, gravelly voice, good receding hairline, into sports, you know, likes to scuba dive -- these kinds of bizarre ideas that I had in my mind of okay, this is a good male role model for me. You know?"

Sam talked more about his own feelings about the stereotypes he had about men and his own masculinity. He stated that he became a RE because he "came to really realize that the service that they were providing to me as a graduate assistant was a valuable service. Something that I might want to learn more about."

Mary, who is heterosexual and an undergraduate student also revealed that her reasons for joining were job related. She said, " I held the position of United Front spokesperson." The United Front is the Multicultural Student Center on campus, where all of the student group offices are located. She said, "I felt that having that position I should be able to talk about every culture that exists on campus and every different group of people. So I got more involved with the United Front and then, I kept seeing the rainbow as I walked into the United Front. And I was, like, well, what's that? And I really didn't hear the word gay or lesbian till I got to maybe, almost graduating high school. So I was never really exposed to that."

Although not involved in United Front, Deona, a heterosexual graduate student, joined for similar reasons to Mary. She noted, "I talked to a couple people about it [the RE program] and they weren't really sure, you know, what it would be about or what it was. And, to be honest, I didn't really know, either, from the short description. But I thought, as part of my growing I want to learn about the gay community because this is obviously something that's going to be talking about that. So this seemed like an

opportunity for me because the gay community was a community that I've never been exposed to before."

In contrast to Mary and Deona, Marsha, an undergraduate and a lesbian had different reasons for joining. "I decided to become a Rainbow Educator because I thought I could provide some good insight, being that I am a lesbian. And I am the vice-president of Pride. So I was also hoping to pick up some education myself, about the gay community. And educate other people in the same process."

As noted above, some members joined to show support for the LGB community on campus. Kathy, a heterosexual member with minority group status, told us, "although I didn't know how it was for the LGBT community at USD when I was a student, I knew how it was to be different on this campus. And it became apparent to me immediately. And I didn't know if it was me or them. Was I reading it wrong? I didn't know what it was. But it became clear there was this unspoken kind of thing that to be different was not necessarily a good thing on this campus." And Linda a heterosexual faculty member also mentioned how important it was for her to talk about issues of sexual orientation in her class. She told us she joined, "because it fit with my curriculum. Talking about diversity issues. The book I'm using talks about identity negotiation, and one of the primary identities is gender. And, you know, sexual orientation has always been important, in terms of studying it in my class, so I figured it makes more intuitive sense if I was the practitioner of material, you know. Actually going out there and being a part of the community, as opposed to looking at from the outside."

And finally, at least three of the gay men in the group talked about their own coming out process in relation to their RE membership. Mike, a graduate student who is gay, said he joined, "for purely selfish reasons. I'd recently come out, and so to join the Rainbow Education group was to learn more about myself and see how far I could push myself. And trying to see how well I could deal with people looking at me and recognizing the fact that I am gay. And I felt that not only a test, but I had something to offer, like a recent, fresh story, to the Rainbow Education program. And I kind of wanted to finally be a voice for my community. So I decided to sign up."

Fear of the Unknown

In the previous *awareness* stage outlined by Gelberg & Chojnacki, the authors (counselors) experienced low self- esteem and isolation with their new role as allies. The participants in this study also experienced isolation, yet this occurred at this next phase, *fear of the unknown*. In this phase, participants again reflected upon their motivations and their anxieties about entering and remaining in the program. Although some alignment is evident in this phase with the previous Gelberg & Chojnacki *awareness* stage, we believe the *fear of the unknown* phase most closely aligns with the *ambivalence* stage identified by Gelberg and Chojnacki (1995), and the *heterosexual active acceptance stage* outlined by Broido (2000), as she reinterpreted the Hardiman/Jackson model. In the Gelberg and Chojnacki *ambivalence* stage, participants experienced a sense of ambivalence about their work, and "incongruence between their objectives and behaviors as allies" (p.267). This phase also corresponds with Broido's work with the Hardiman/Jackson model, in which they describe as the *heterosexual active acceptance stage*. In their stage and our phase, participants held negative stereotypes and beliefs about the "other," that was apparent as a result of previous learning. The RE members revealed incongruities between their actions and behaviors as allies or advocates. This was represented by expressions of anxiety about the other members of the group, whose sexual orientation w[illegible] different than theirs, as well as anxiety and ambivalence about what those, outside of the group might think about them as a result of their participation in the group. Several noted they were fearful of how others might perceive them. In this phase our data again supports the notion of straight allies and gay and lesbian advocates moving through similar phases, as both LGB and straight participants revealed their initial apprehension concerning their membership and association with the RE program. In addition, similar to the ambivalence stage, gay and straight participants noted feelings of increased support from each other as a result of increased understanding.

Upon selection in the RE program participants acknowledged a variety of feelings. Many were excited, others expressed fear of not knowing what to expect. Many of the heterosexual participants had little experience with or exposure to the gay community. In

addition, several held stereotypes that they soon realized were inaccurate. Several heterosexual members recalled wondering, with trepidation, if there would be an implicit assumption that they were gay if they joined the group. Conversely, a few of the gay participants were dealing with their own coming out processes and some questioned the presence of heterosexual members in the group.

At least two of the gay male students expressed initial fear of the group membership. One in particular, Tim, was fearful of the positionality of other members in relation to his own position as a gay male. He told us he "was suspicious at first, in the initial training. It's like: who are these people that signed up to do this? And I thought: well, they're all gay; they have to be, 'cause why would they do this? Again, that was probably the most I learned from this experience was about allies. And that there are good people out there who won't care [what people think]."

John and Harry told us how valuable this experience had been for them. John also noted his surprise when he learned that the group included heterosexual members. He was still working through his own coming out process; and he believed learning from others and feeling as though others could learn from him was valuable to his development:

> I thought everybody that was an RE were either gay, you know, bi. But it turned out that there was a mixture. It was a pretty diverse group; from undergrads to grad students to professors to people that were heterosexual, homosexual. So it was a variety. I think it was very beneficial. I was able to learn from others and I think they were able to learn from me. In the beginning I was kind of thinking well, maybe it's going to be really hard to try to explain my situation and explain where I'm coming from, where a heterosexual might disagree or whatever. But I think in the long run everything came together and everything went really well. There was a lot of understanding where everyone was coming from.

In contrast, Harry's anxiety was placed in his own fear of not be accepting by the group. As a heterosexual while male and having lived his whole life in the majority culture, he was fearful of how he would be received by the group, "at first there was some apprehension because I was scared of how I would be accepted, being a straight white male. Because my interactions had only been limited to where the gay person in the room was the only gay person in the room. So it's more comfortable for me to be with that person. Not where my sexual orientation is the minority in the room. So that was the only

apprehension I had, just uncomfortableness with the newness of it and getting used to this role."

Marsha, a lesbian, reflected on what she thought about some of the other heterosexual members in the group. "At least three of our members have addressed their concerns about guilt by association, where they felt that by showing up as a Rainbow Educator, their sexuality is questioned because they're there. And the class or the group may assume that they are, you know, gay, and they're not. It kind of makes them unsettled."

Marsha's understanding of the experience of the heterosexual participants appeared quite accurate. Deona and Mary, both heterosexual undergraduate students, had concerns about being labeled "lesbian" by students on campus. Mary noted, "I really had this worry becoming an RE that people are going to think I'm a lesbian." Deona had similar fears and told us, "the one thing that I really worried about getting into the Rainbow Educators, was, were people going to think I was gay. Because not everyone knows me, so they're going to think I am. To me, that was a little scary at first."
In addition, Jessica, a heterosexual graduate student, described her experience trying to explain to her family why she was working as an RE, and that it did not mean she was a lesbian. She told them she believed, "this was an important thing that I'm doing, but they responded - why are you doing that, are you a lesbian?"

Acknowledgement of privilege

This phase is parallel to Broido's (2000) interpretation of the Hardiman/Jackson *heterosexual resistance* stage, wherein members of dominant groups begin to recognize the ways in which they have benefited as a result of their privileged status. The connections made between race, gender and sexual orientation became evident in much of what the participants shared with us. Participants began to understand others, because they began to understand themselves. This occurred through the process of re-examining the intersections in each of them in relation to race, gender and sexual orientation.

Several participants noted a better understanding among the gay, lesbian and heterosexual group members.

Jessica talked to us about her own struggle with the stereotypes that she grew up with, "I'm figuring out the truth and not just the stereotypes. Any of those stereotypes that I grew up with in an all-white community." Struggling to understand why she was not told the "truth" growing up, Jessica, like many of the other Rainbow Educators who were raised in similar environments, initially struggled to understand and come to terms with what they had been taught.

The majority of individuals involved in the RE program acknowledged a growing awareness concerning some issue related to discrimination as a result of racism, heterosexism and sexism. This was often an acknowledgement of one's own privileged status, as in the case of several of the male participants. Several of the white males, talked about their learning as white men. Harry, a straight white male, said, "one of the things I really enjoyed about the Rainbow Educator program was that we talked about sexuality and its relationship to ethnicity and gender. In a lot of ways, I was very skeptical of my upbringing as a male and a lot of the - sort of - programming." He grew in another way, to recognize his heterosexual privilege, and then reflected on what his role had been and could be in the future:

> So it's realizing that it's the big slap in the face, that you know what? Yeah, I'm part of the problem, by not acknowledging that there is a problem, so to speak. That there's a lot of privileges that I have, and have had, that I never really attributed to my sexual orientation, which could have been because of the fact that I wasn't gay. So that was kind of the thing that was most shocking, I think. And probably one of the areas that I grew the most, in realizing that there's a lot of privilege out there that goes unrecognized, in my own cultural group.

Sam is a graduate student and staff member at the university. He is also a white heterosexual male. He talked to us about how he was dealing with his own identity as a straight white male:

> To a large extent in my life, I had that stereotype of gay men being, you know, much more effeminate and kind of these sort of things. So, like I was saying, on

> the continuum of sexual orientation, I found myself not so much attracted to men but definitely interested much more in things like art and things like music, that, you know, didn't seem to really mesh with a lot of other guys that I was living with at times. And so I would get comments all the time of, like: are you gay? What's this all about? Which was really interesting.

Later Sam told us how his friends taunted him and called him the *rainbow warrior*. Since he felt strongly about his membership in the RE program, he challenged his friends, and felt he could do this without completely "killing them off." He said, "I think that my role as a heterosexual and as a male, especially, in a counseling field dominated by women -- my role as a male is very important. And I hope that my role as a heterosexual is important in conveying what I want to convey by being a Rainbow Educator. A sense of universal acceptance and tolerance." Amy, a faculty member who is white also talked about learning to recognize her privilege. When we asked her what she learned, she said, "one huge thing [she learned] is the whole heterosexual privilege. It's a huge, huge, huge lesson I learned."

The same type of recognition came to some of the gay participants. Tim, who is gay and a person of color, thought deeply about his privilege as a male. "I think a lot of the training that we did made me sensitive. I think bad stuff's easy to believe [about yourself] and so you sort of focus on: oh, okay, I'm brown -- whatever. And, woe is me, I'm working class. It was the male piece that I'd always forget. I think it was one of the things when we were talking about sex that I didn't realize sometimes where my privilege is. And it was helpful to get that -- I got that through this experience."

Parker, who is a gay white male, examined his own lack of awareness of difference within the gay community. He believes he has become more open-minded as a result of his work with the RE program:

> It was really a bit of a stumbling block, I think, in that I thought there was sort of a universal, a pan-universal LGBT community. But eventually reconciling myself to the fact that the LGBT community is as diverse as the rest of society, has inevitably forced me to be more open-minded, to be more aware of, when I'm out, what groups are under-represented or over-represented and how that changes the dynamics of the group. And issues of power that come up when one group is over-represented or under-represented, and how that affects communication among group members and so on. There's been a real education in that regard as well.

Frequently, students of color, who are often targets of racism, do not recognize their own prejudices and stereotypes. Mary, an undergraduate, heterosexual student of color told us, "being able to educate my mother, also, it opened up her eyes as well, like, this is becoming a norm in society now and, you know, you need to learn how to accept it. And it's happening to a lot more people it's not just white people. So that was a big shock to me." Similarly Latonya a graduate, heterosexual student of color, talked about her journey to understand the connections between discrimination in her community and that in the gay community. She told us a story about how much more comfortable she felt now, going into an area of town know for its large gay population and gay friendly businesses. She said, "I began to realize, this must be how the white folk at home feel, once they realize okay, these people aren't so bad; let me go over to that grocery store and just deal." She further explained:

> Intolerance is across the board; you don't have to be wearing a white sheet to bring forth ignorance that you've learned. I'm understanding how there are differences within the gay community, just like in my own community. And just being able to open up like that, I think, has a lot to do with the Rainbow Educators, because I was able to ask those questions that I felt so ashamed to ask before. I think it has really helped me grow.

As people begin to understand discrimination and its many manifestations in our society, they begin to recognize its legacy within themselves (Tatum, 1992). In the next two phases, the participants moved toward a better understanding of themselves and thus a greater ability to be allies and advocates for the LGB community.

Engagement

In this phase, members of the group began to feel more comfortable with their identification as heterosexual allies or gay and lesbian advocates. In the Gelberg and Chojnacki (1995) stage of *activism,* the authors became more active as allies as they experienced a greater sense of empowerment and self-esteem. Likewise, in Broido's *heterosexual redefinition*, (this is drawn from the Hardiman/Jackson *redefinition stage*), heterosexual allies "focus on using their own privilege within their spheres of influence to bring about social change" (p.352). In the Rainbow Educator program, participants

moved through the various phases in different ways and at different times throughout the program. Notwithstanding, the majority of members eventually felt more comfortable engaging others and speaking out in support of the LGB community.

For example, Linda, a faculty member, who is heterosexual, discussed how she has come to be more comfortable with her own sexual identity and with her ability to engage with others around the issue of sexual orientation.

> My own personal comfort level [has changed]. I don't know what I would have done before if a candidate came out to me. You know? Now that more students are coming out for -- for whatever reason, I feel more comfortable being the ambiguously -- ambiguously sexual person. They don't know if Dr. S. is straight or gay and I'm really cool with that. I'm more comfortable talking about examples and not feeling like I -- I have to quote anyone, in terms of -- or not represent all gays or all lesbians. But feel more comfortable in terms of talking about it more naturally, as part of a conversation.

Carol, whose mother is a lesbian, shared how she has become more able to respond to people in support of the LGB community. "The training has been awesome. I tend to be a little bit irrational when people offend me. Or tend to be on the ignorant side of issues. I fly off the handle a little bit. I think that the training has given me the confidence to calm down and to understand how to answer questions. And I think all of the kind of mock question-and-answer-period things that we've done have been really helpful. All of the information has been awesome." Similarly, Deona spoke about her new ability to work closely with the LGB students on campus. She told us, "at retreats I would be the designated representative for Pride [the LGB student group on campus] and I would share the little poster about Pride and everything. So, yeah, I feel a lot closer to the issues, a lot closer to the gay community at USD."

In the RE program, members have many opportunities to facilitate groups, present their ideas and communicate openly about their status as allies and advocates for the LGB community. Several members also noted how the training increased their understanding of the LGB community and their ability to communicate effectively with others in conversations about sexual orientation. Prior to coming an RE, Kathy feared speaking in public about her minority status:

> Having the opportunity to become an RE has been one of the greatest gifts in my life. It's been a major developmental stage in my life. It's taught me about

> diversity, how to handle conflict, how to view things in a different perspective and how to help others view things in a different perspective. How to face fears and accept great challenges and how to stand up for what I believe is true, good and just. I would not have become the person I am today if I had not become an RE.

Likewise, Harry, who was a graduate student at the time he was an RE, later went on to interview and get a job working with students at another university. This university was also a private catholic school, but it had a more active and vocal LGB student community. Harry, who is a heterosexual white male, talked about the changes he noted in the way he understood LGB people and issues related to understanding more about the LGB community. "I think there's a lot of confidence that I started to have because it was a part of me. And I feel like, as a person I feel much more comfortable with my own sexuality and just realizing and accepting that part of my identity, that it is something that I need to be aware of. Kind of just as much as I'm aware of my skin color. Or any other aspect of my identity." He felt this had a direct impact on his success as a Student Affairs professional in the future:

> I was really confident, honestly, when I interviewed at __, because I felt for sure I would get the job. I didn't see how they could have turned down this aspect of my background. And I felt like because I was able to articulate it, probably more so than someone who's just trying to promote that aspect of themselves for lip service, that I feel like it's something that I do every day, now, as part of my being. And it's something that I continue to do in my job now, in doing trainings and in my hiring's.

Other students pointed out to us ways that they felt the program would help them in their future career because they were more knowledgeable and comfortable talking about the LGB community. Jessica, who plans to be a therapist after graduate school talked about how she has learned a number of things that might be helpful to her in the future:

> I have learned a lot -- kind of historical things that maybe we don't learn so much in the classroom. I guess I'm learning more about the legal restrictions more, about same-sex couples, which is what I'm interested in as far as career-wise, because I'll be working with couples and families. And how it may be difficult -- first of all, to maybe get same-sex couples to come to therapy if they're struggling with coming out. I'm learning more and more about how it's really crappy for same-sex couples. And so the more you're learning, the more useful it could be - Hopefully someday I can apply it in my practice as a therapist.

The students who are participants in the Rainbow Educator program plan to be teachers, counselors, lawyers; they want to work in schools, non-profit organizations and businesses. They acknowledged their cognitive and emotional development as a result of their engagement with each other about issues of sexual orientation. Many felt more comfortable as heterosexual allies and as gay or lesbian advocates for their own community.

Three students, all undergraduates, all gay, shared with us their experience of joining the group, how it supported their coming out process, and how they feel more secure about serving as advocates for the gay community. John stated it quite simply:

> I think there's many reasons why I decided to be a Rainbow Educator, but I think the main one was during the time, when the whole program came into effect, I had just come out of, you know, coming in terms with my sexuality and being gay. I figured that this would help me in dealing with my sexuality, knowing more about it, you know. 'Cause it was -- just all happened really fast -- dealing with my sexuality -- and I figured, well, maybe this is a good opportunity to not only educate myself more on what I'm feeling and what I'm going through, but also going out and maybe educating others on what it is or what the LGBT people have to go through, or just trying to understand and break down barriers and bridges, to try to build a network, I guess, for everyone just be in peace.

And finally, Jeff, who had previously come out and been a fairly outspoken advocate for the LGB community on campus, still felt the program was instrumental to his development as a gay man. He said, "for me, it definitely helped with the whole process. Last year, when we started the program, I had been out for a year. So I was fairly comfortable, but still -- there were still certain situations where I wouldn't have said things, and it helped to get me more and more comfortable with myself."

Conscious self-identification as allies/advocates

In the *Conscious self-identification* phase participants experienced a greater sense of connection with each other, as a result of their increased congruence between their own identity and their development as allies or advocates. The in-group versus out-group dynamic (who's gay, who's straight) present at the beginning of their exposure to the

group/LGB community, had generally disappeared. Moreover, many members expressed an increased sense of connectedness with each other, with the RE group, and with the LGB community. In addition, much like in the Gelberg and Chojnacki (1995) *pride* stage, RE's expressed pride in their increased professional and personal activism.

Although quite similar to the previous engagement phase, here, heterosexual participants expressed a far greater congruence between their feelings and behaviors in relation to the LGB community. In other words, they felt more connected, and more able to see themselves as joined with the LGB community. Deona who is a heterosexual student of color said, "I'm not afraid to go to a PRIDE meeting. I'm not afraid to have a conversation with someone that's gay and be afraid of what to say or how to act. I'm more comfortable talking about the issues. I'm more comfortable using the words. I feel a lot closer to the issues, a lot closer to the gay community at USD. I feel like I'm a liaison, a part of it." This sense of comfort and the readiness of the heterosexual participants to connect with gay, lesbian and bisexual students, faculty and staff, were consistently referred to in one form or another. Harry, a heterosexual white male, spoke about how the history of the LGB culture belongs to him too:

> As a result of being a Rainbow Educator I think the main thing is I kind of see myself as someone who can be outspoken and be an advocate and talk about these issues without any hesitation. There's no reason why I can't ever talk about it. And my views of the gay/lesbian community, I think I've gained much. I feel just humbled by the fact that I have the education and I know a little bit more about the history of the culture -- what the culture looks like now, where it's going, what the issues facing that community currently are. The history really helps because I feel like it's, in a sense it belongs to me, too. In the sense that there's something -- there's a role that I can play in the history, in knowing the history and also sort of creating it, in that sense.

Many found the training to be informative and educational. Having more knowledge of any subject helped the RE's to be more comfortable speaking out. With issues of sexual orientation, where people tend to feel less comfortable, a solid educational experience contributes to one's ability to be an outspoken supporter for the LGB community.

Mary, who we previously noted as entering the program with very little exposure to the LGB community, now recognizes the ways in which her behaviors have become more consistent with her self-identification as an ally, she told us, "as of now, I can tell

you that I've grown, you know, that I've become more knowledgeable about the subject and stuff like that, and I've learned how to talk to people that use the word gay or, you know, fag, and stuff like that. I sit them down and I try to explain to them and sometimes they understand; sometimes they don't even bother with me." At the time of the interview, Mary indicated that she now had the knowledge and strategies to confront homophobic behaviors, even if her friends were not comfortable with her speaking out.

For Amy and Emily, who are both heterosexual faculty members, having factual information and hearing from others with more knowledge on the subject, made a big difference in their readiness to be vocal supporters of the LGB community. Amy said:

> I want to be an advocate for change and want to be an ally and feel that I'm useful here. This has been an enormous education for me. And the big binder that we have is very helpful. And what I actually liked especially about that was George's discussion. I don't know him, but hearing the story of a man -- a gay man on this campus is very, very powerful. That's why I really appreciate that. My knowledge, my education is going to change and improve. And then I feel like I can speak as more of an authoritative ally than just someone who just feels like they're an ally.

And Emily, who also teaches in the College of Arts and Sciences, shared a similar perspective, "the amount that I know has changed a whole lot. And I have appreciated the sort of factual, historical presentation, say, that George gave last year, in particular. And Wallace earlier this year, about hate crimes. Certainly my knowledge and awareness have changed. Which is good. Maybe I can speak from a slightly more educated point of view."

Many stories emerged from the interviews about students and faculty who identified as straight, gay, or lesbian, but who wanted to learn more, and did. They told us how important this information was to them and how they felt being an ally or advocate for the community was much easier now.

John, William and Tim all gay men, learned to respect and appreciate the willingness of others to become allies and work alongside them for change. Realizing that all people can work together in the struggle for equality, participants in the Rainbow Educator program worked together to make a difference on campus. With a new understanding of themselves and the "other" a greater sense of community and advocacy had developed.

Discussion

Many members of dominant groups (ie: white or heterosexual) do not easily, or readily acknowledge their status as members of a privileged community. This concern is exacerbated further for heterosexuals by the lack of identity development models available to them to understand their experience as a privileged community (Broido, E. 2000; Gelberg, S. & Chojnacki, 1995; DiStefano, T., Croteau, J., Anderson M., Kampa-Kokesch & Bullard, M. 2000). Just as white racial identity development models help members of the racially dominant group understand their experience in coming to terms with their white privilege, the model we propose supports members of the sexually dominant group as they learn how to see the world from the perspective of experiences and lives that are different from their own (Tatum, 1994; McIntosh, 1998). However, ally work can also be done within the targeted population (Broido, 2000). In the Rainbow Educator Program, members of the dominant and targeted groups benefit from working together as allies and advocates for the LGB faculty, staff and students on one campus. The gay and straight participants in this study benefited from the knowledge, skills and increased levels of comfort with the "other," that they received as a result of their involvement in the Rainbow Educator Program.

We agree with other scholars (Reynolds & Pope, 1991; Meyers, L., et al, 1991) who note the futility in some instances of linear models to describe the development of individuals with multiple identities. However, we see the utility of a linear framework in this instance to help student affairs professionals and others in higher education understand the developmental processes individuals may undergo as they evolve as allies or advocates for any oppressed community. This model is offered as a heuristic device to provide a foundation of understanding for those working with LGB students, faculty and staff.

Very little research has been done in relation to the LGB community and the role of student affair professionals (Croteau & Talbot, 2000). In an unprecedented summary of the findings from recent studies that examined the student affairs profession and its understanding, awareness and practices regarding the LGB community, James Croteau

and Donna Talbot (2000) draw eight conclusions. Four of these conclusions are worth noting here. First, the research indicates that LGB student affairs professionals are well represented in the profession, more so than other minority populations. Secondly, student affairs practitioners indicate (responses were self-reported) that they have higher levels of knowledge about the LGB community, than did graduate faculty and students. Third, student affairs practitioners report lower levels of skill in working with the LGB community as compared to their skill in working with other diverse populations. Finally, graduate faculty and students have lower levels of knowledge, skills and comfort with sexual minority issues. "The scores also suggest that a hierarchy exists in participants' comfort, skill, and knowledge across diverse populations being addressed. Nearly every time, sexual minorities are at the bottom of this hierarchy" (p. 16).

These four conclusions offer a possible scenario for the direction we might expect from those working in student affairs and related fields. The conclusions also support the utility of programs and identity development models that contribute to our understanding of how to engage with and support the LGB campus community. Moreover, becoming a heterosexual ally can be challenging for those who are not able to understand themselves or appreciate the experiences of the LGB community. Research in this area is critical for sustained efforts to recognize the complexities, and to help explain the process of coming to understand heterosexual privilege and heterosexual ally development.

With respect to issues of diversity and in particular sexual diversity, faculty and student affairs professionals may find it difficult to engage with students and as a result, students from the LGB community are left with feelings of isolation (Lopez & Chism, 1993, Tierney 1992). And as research indicates, students are most effective when they are able to study and learn in an atmosphere where they feel appreciated and affirmed (Tierney, 1992). This is a model that is unique to the participants involved in one program at a private catholic university: the Rainbow Educator program. Further research is needed to investigate the phases and their efficacy. However, the unique aspects of the Rainbow Educator program afford those working in higher education with an example of a program that could be easily replicated at other institutions. In addition, the five phases of identity development could provide a framework for professionals to use with students

and staff for understanding heterosexual privilege.

Heterosexual students, faculty and staff in the *entry* phase may have difficulty collaborating with or even effectively communicating with others who identify as gay, lesbian or bisexual. For members of the sexually dominant group who have never had any experiences with an openly LGB person, fear and trepidation often keep them from exploring topics related to sexual orientation in a responsible way. Based on what the Rainbow Educators told us, there are many people on our campus who fit this description, including several of Rainbow Educator team members. Similarly, programs that bring gay, lesbian, bisexual and heterosexual members together to explore the stages may find commonalities among them; particularly fear based on inaccurate stereotypes each has of the *other*. In our *fear of the unknown* phase, both groups noted negative stereotypes of the *other*, which often prevented them from engaging in honest dialogue. Our identity development model could be used by a variety of groups on campus as a starting point to help them examine their apprehensions and fears and the possible origins of them.

As noted, similar to students who are from other underrepresented cultural groups, LGB students may feel disconnected from the university experience. Learning about different forms of oppression and privilege moved many RE members into the *acknowledgement of privilege* phase, where several mentioned their own previous lack of awareness concerning white privilege, heterosexual privilege, and even able body privilege. As the participants engaged in training with others who were different from themselves, they began to recognize their differences as well as their similarities, and they were able to use this knowledge in their work as partners and/or allies for the gay, lesbian and bisexual campus community.

Of course most of the work in this program was done outside of the classroom, and student affairs professionals are now responsible for the Rainbow Educator program. But, it began as a result of students, faculty and staff working together for the LGB community. Recent research indicates that student learning and personal development are influenced by activities that fall outside of the traditional classroom setting (Kellogg, 1999; AAHE, 1998). This program supports the view that student learning can be enhanced by the collective wisdom and collaboration of faculty, staff and administration

(Banta, Trudy & Kuh, George. 1998). Yet, faculty members often do not see the value, and do not want to participate in, activities that fall outside of the traditional classroom setting. Perhaps this is why, among the twenty participants we interviewed, only three were faculty members. However, we know that "faculty, staff and peers directly influence the quality of students' experiences through their interactions inside and outside of the classroom" (Kuh, 1998). The faculty (all heterosexual) who did participate acknowledged a greater sense of engagement with students in and out of the classroom. This was noted most often in the *engagement* and *conscious self-identification* phases. They, like other heterosexual student and staff participants, began to feel more connected to the LGB community; more comfortable speaking up in support of the LGB community and more connected with the LGB students on campus. Likewise, the LGB students felt more able to express themselves as positive role models for the LGB community, as a result of their learning, and their connection with heterosexual students, faculty and staff, who were open to learning with them about their community.

Conclusion

The limitations of this research must be noted here. Among others, they include the inherent bias of the researchers. As members of the Rainbow Educator executive committee, and co-authors of the original grant, we certainly have a stake in the positive outcomes of this research. Additionally, the generalizability of this research is limited to the experiences of the twenty participants of the Rainbow Educator team from the University of San Diego. However, future research in the area of heterosexual identity development is desperately needed. Future research might include a study to test the reliability and validity of a heterosexual identity development model. Many student affairs candidates are exposed to racial identity development models, along with homosexual identity development models, in their graduate programs. These models seem to generally serve to support the graduate students learning about themselves, and the models provide them with valuable insights for working with undergraduate students. A heterosexual identity development model could provide graduate students (and the faculty who train them) with valuable insight concerning their work with gay, lesbian and bisexual students; an underrepresented group that deserves our attention.

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